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Application No. 10/690,344

Docket No.: 025058.0101PTUS

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A communications management system for managing a public involvement project with a front end including a concurrent public feedback loop with public users from the public-at-large and a backend including an integration and collaboration of public feedback and the public involvement project, comprising:

a server computer operatively connected to a network;

a front end secure web portal ~~for a first classification of users not acting in a capacity associated with managing the public involvement project to remotely access the server computer over the network for providing information regarding the public involvement project to the public users from the public-at-large and receiving a large number of public comment inputs regarding the public involvement project from the public users from the public-at-large;~~

~~an a backend~~ access for ~~a second classification of users~~ project team members managing acting in a capacity associated with managing the public involvement project to access the server computer;

a communications manager application for receiving the large number of public comment inputs from the public users from the public-at-large and handling the large number of public comment inputs from the public users from the public-at-large for access by the project team members to use and respond to the large number of public comment inputs from the public users from the public-at-large regarding the public involvement project having:

an information module;

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a project team tools module;

a communications tools module;

site management tools module;

wherein the backend is suitable for managing one or more public involvement projects;

and

wherein the server computer provides access, following authentication, by the public users and the project team members ~~first classification of users and the second classification of users~~ to one or more of the information module, the project team tools module, the communications tools module, and the site management tools module.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the information module provides one or more of project overview, recent project changes, and project status.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one software interface for receiving the large number of public comment inputs ~~public comments~~.

4. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 3, wherein the at least one software interface comprises:

a first sub-interface for creating and submitting authenticating an individual selected from the public users from the public-at-large; and

a second sub-interface for receiving information about the individual selected from the public users from the public-at-large.

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5. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 4, wherein the first and second interfaces are presented to the individual selected from the public users from the public-at-large in a seamless manner.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the project team tools module provides one or more of a task manager, related links, a project calendar, an image manager, a document library, a project showcase, a directory, a listing of team members, and electronic communications with team members.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the communications tool module provides one or more of web conferencing and message board.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the site management tools module provides one or more of site maintenance, survey maintenance, web trend tools, survey reports, public comment and public comment reports.

9. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein further comprising a backend software interface for interactions with team members, the backend interface further comprises comprising:

an option for uploading documents,

an option for one or more of sorting and searching the large number of public comment inputs public-submissions and documents in accordance with a specified search criteria; and

an option for filtering the large number of public comment inputs and documents public submissions.

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10. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the site management tools module includes screening public submission to identify the presence of inappropriate subject matter.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the identified inappropriate subject matter is sequestered for detailed review.

12. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the project team tools include searching for public submissions in accordance with one or more of a keyword, a time of submission, an identifier, an idea, a theme and a vision.

13. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the communications manager application further ~~management module~~ comprises:

shared modular code; and

means for responding to different browser implementations by invoking corresponding code.

14. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 13, wherein the communications manager application ~~management module~~ further supports Web site maintenance by one or more of updating dynamic text areas, creating Web sites by using templates, handling multiple Web sites by using customizations of at least one shared feature, providing a separate address linked to a Web site for accepting the large number of public comment inputs ~~public comments~~, providing a separate address for accepting comments, automatic font and color adjustments, and supporting substantially unlimited number of active pages.

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15. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein work product is published on a Website substantially concurrently with its generation to invite comments to complete a feedback loop.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the communication manager application management module enables one or more of a public agency, a quasi public agency and an enterprise to manage the large number of public comment inputs public eomments, managing comments from a select audience, support one or more teams of consultants, agency staff, stakeholder organizations relevant to one or more public involvement projects at the same time.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the communication manager application management module provides one or more of a public agency, a quasi public agency and an enterprise electronic project management with work-flow, document and image management, content management, Web-site management, and reporting technologies.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein access is provided to one or more of the information module, the project team tools module, the communications tools module, and the site management tools module at a plurality of levels.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the plurality of access levels include User Manager for adding and assigning users to projects, Project Manager for creating new projects and having full access to the communications management module, and Team Member for having access to a limited number of modules with read/update privileges.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising a public website maintenance interface for providing access to one or more of a project overview, a timeline, a

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document repository, an events calendar, an image manager, a public comment manager module, and a survey module.

21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20 ~~19~~, wherein the communications manager application management module can access the public website maintenance interface via a project site maintenance interface.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 20 ~~19~~, wherein the public comment manager module includes providing a submitter with one or more of an option of being notified of additional developments and participating in at least one survey.

23. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising modules for one or more of general information about a project, project goals, a project team, public documents, public notices, an image resource library, a project calendar, a project showcase, and a public comment module with one or more of a notification and survey functionality.

24. (Withdrawn) A communications manager contained in a computer-readable storage medium comprising:

an information module further comprising a project overview, project news and project status;

a project team tools module further comprising a task manager, calendar, team access management, team communications and image manager;

a communications tools module further comprising one or more message boards and web conferencing;

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a site management tools module further comprising web site content updating, document library, image library, project directory, event calendar and internal maintenance; and

wherein the communication manager provides access, following authentication, to one or more of the information module, the project team tools module, the communications tools module, and the site management tools module.

25. (Withdrawn) The communications manager module of claim 24 further comprising a plurality of access levels including User Manager for adding and assigning users to projects, Project Manager for creating new projects and having full access to the communications management module, and Team Member for having access to a limited number of modules with read/update privileges.

26. (Withdrawn) An interface for a Web site coupled to the communications manager of claim 24 comprising a plurality of links selected from links to general information about a project, project goals, a project team, documents, notices, an image resource library, a project calendar, a project showcase, and a comment module.

27. (Withdrawn) The interface of claim 26, wherein the comment module further includes one or more of a notification and survey functionality.

28. (Withdrawn) The interface of claim 26, wherein the single point of entry is provided by requiring authentication of one or more of a username, a password, an encrypted session, and a challenge-response protocol.

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29. (Withdrawn) A method of using updated comments from a Web site coupled to the communications manager of claim 24, comprising:

authenticating a submitter;

receiving a plurality of comments from the submitter;

storing the plurality of comments from the submitter with other comments received at the Web site;

retrieving comments by the submitter by carrying out a search;

organizing the retrieved comments chronologically to prepare an updated comment; and

using the updated comment in a comment report.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 29, wherein a proposed rule is modified in response to the comment report.

31. (Withdrawn) A method of updating a posted issue inviting comments at a public Web site coupled to the communications manager of claim 24, comprising:

posting an issue at the public Web site with a specified date for receiving responses;

reviewing submissions received on the posted issue at the public Web site; and

modifying the posted issue in response to the comments prior to the expiry of the specified date for receiving responses, whereby subsequent responses are directed to the modified posted issue.

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32. (Withdrawn) A communications manager contained in a computer-readable storage medium comprising:

an information module for welcoming a user and referencing permission level access, wherein the information module further comprises a project overview, project news and project status,

a project team tools module for coordinating and informing team members, wherein the project team tools module further comprises a task manager, calendar, team access management, team communications and image manager,

a communications tools module for facilitating information transfer, wherein the communications tools module further comprises one or more message boards and web conferencing,

a site management tools module for updating communications work environments and global settings, wherein the site management tools module further comprises web site content updating, document library, image library, project directory, event calendar and internal maintenance; and

wherein the communication manager provides access to one or more of the information module, the project team tools module, the communications tools module, and the site management tools module.

33. (Withdrawn) The communications manager of claim 32, wherein the communications manager provides access, following authentication to the information module,

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the project team tools module, the communications tools module, and the site management tools module.

34. (Withdrawn) The communications manager of claim 32, wherein the communications manager facilitates public communication and public comment.

35. (Withdrawn) A method of dispensing public information and processing comments from a public comment procedure comprising:

creating and posting a proposal of interest to the public-at-large on a server computer connected to a network,

receiving one or more comments from the public-at-large through the server computer connected to the network,

searching the one or more comments from the public-at-large,

organizing the one or more comments from the public-at-large,

generating a summary of the one or more comments, and

generating a report based upon the summary of the one or more comments.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35, further comprising modifying the report.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35, further comprising modifying the proposal of interest based upon the report.

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35, further comprising modifying the one or more comments.

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39. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35, further comprising allowing dynamic feedback in agency decision making based on the one or more comments.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35, wherein the dispensing public information and processing comments from a public comment procedure pertains to a charette.

41. (Currently Amended) A method of managing a public involvement project with a front end including a concurrent public feedback loop with public users from the public-at-large and a backend including an integration and collaboration of public feedback and the public involvement project, comprising:

providing a communications manager application on a server computer having an information module, a project team tools module, a communications tools module, and a site management tools module,

wherein the communications manager application receives a large number of public comment inputs from the public users from the public-at-large and handles the large number of public comment inputs from the public users from the public-at-large for access by project team members to use and respond to the large number of public comment inputs from the public users from the public-at-large regarding the public involvement project;

providing a front end secure web portal ~~for a first group of users~~ to remotely access the communications manager application for providing information regarding the public involvement project to the public users from the public-at-large and receiving a large number of public comment inputs regarding the public involvement project from the public users from the public-at-large, wherein the

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~~first group of users acts in a capacity not associated with managing the public involvement project,~~

providing a backend ~~an~~ access to the communications manager application for ~~a second~~ group of users the project team members, wherein the second group of users acts in a capacity associated with managing the public involvement project to access the server computer,

~~allowing the second group of users to create, post or revise a proposal of public interest,~~

receiving ~~one or more comments~~ the large number of public comment inputs regarding the public involvement project from the ~~first group of users~~ public users from the public-at-large at the front end, and

reviewing and handling the one or more comments large number of public comment inputs regarding the proposal of public involvement at a backend, and

wherein the backend is suitable for managing one or more public involvement projects.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 41, further comprising generating a modified proposal based upon reviewing and handling the large number of public comment inputs regarding the public involvement project ~~the one or more comments~~.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 42, further comprising recreating, reposting or revising the public involvement project ~~proposal of public interest~~.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the information module further comprises a project overview, recent project changes, and project status.

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45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the project team tools module further comprises a task manager, related links, a project calendar, an image manager, a document library, a project showcase, a directory, a listing of team members, and electronic communications with team members.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the communications tool module further comprises web conferencing and one or more message boards.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the site management tools module further comprises site maintenance, survey maintenance, web trend tools, survey reports, public comment and public comment reports.

48. (New) A method for managing a public information site comprising:

providing information to a public-at-large at a front end, wherein the providing

information to the public-at-large comprises uploading information to the public information site,

handling a large number of inputs regarding the information, wherein the large number of inputs are received from the public-at-large at the front end,

transferring the large number of inputs from the public-at-large from the front end to a backend, wherein the back-end receives the large number of inputs from the public-at-large,

characterizing the large number of inputs from the public-at-large at the backend,

filtering the large number of inputs from the public-at-large at the backend,

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analyzing the large number of inputs from the public-at-large at the backend,
providing multiple levels of access to team members at the backend to access the analysis
from the backend, and
responding to the large number of inputs from the public-at-large based upon the analysis
from the backend.

49. (New) The method of claim 48, further comprising generating reports integrating
the large number of inputs from the public-at-large and the analysis from the backend.

50. (New) The method of claim 48, further comprising publishing the analysis from
the backend to enable a concurrent public feedback loop.

51. (New) The method of claim 48, further comprising enabling a discussion forum.